NATIONAL PORTS OF CANADA

MORSE

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The EDITH *and* LORNE PIERCE
COLLECTION *of* CANADIANA

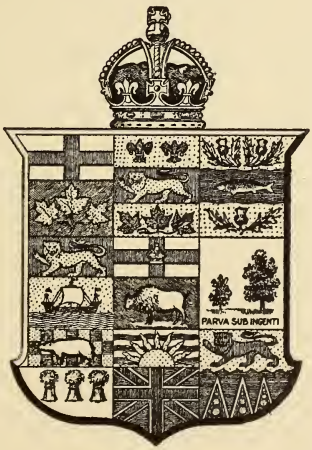
Queen's University at Kingston

NATIONAL PORTS OF CANADA

REPORT OF R. MORSE

Lieut. Colonel Royal Engineers

TO THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT.



FROM THE ARCHIVES OF CANADA

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NATIONAL PORTS OF CANADA.

THE power of appointing suitable places to be Ports of the Crown, founded, as Blackstone thinks, partly upon the right of the King as conservator of the kingdom, partly upon his interest in marine revenues, and King George III., wishing to select the best port in Canada for the use of the British Navy, sent Colonel MORSE, of the Royal Engineers, to Canada in 1784 to report on the harbours for the aforesaid purpose. L'Etang

This report is a most extensive one, being preserved in the archives of Canada, and may be examined by applying to DR. DOUGHTY, the Canadian Archivist.

We herewith give extracts on the principal harbours of this report, and trust that all interested parties will make a careful study of Colonel MORSE's plans and writings.

In considering particularly L'ETANG — the peer of all Canadian harbours — every known device of the marine engineer's skill to produce harbour perfection is embraced in her natural location. Her pre-eminence cannot long remain unrecognized, at least, in the sight of the Canadian Government, and the sharp, shrewd business men of the Dominion.

Let me take you to L'ETANG. Standing on her limestone shores with the blue waves of the Bay of Fundy rolling in at our feet, to the left and right extend two of the most potent factors to which her pre-eminence is due, the long arm of the river to the left, and the Back Bay passage to the right. With such outlets as these for the subsidence of such undulation as cannot be excluded, we see ground swells reduced to a minimum, and that all important essential of shelter and tranquility preserved in its fullest sense.

The bold condition of the left bank of the harbour and river brings instantaneously to the mind the conviction of depth and scope of water and ease in the construction of

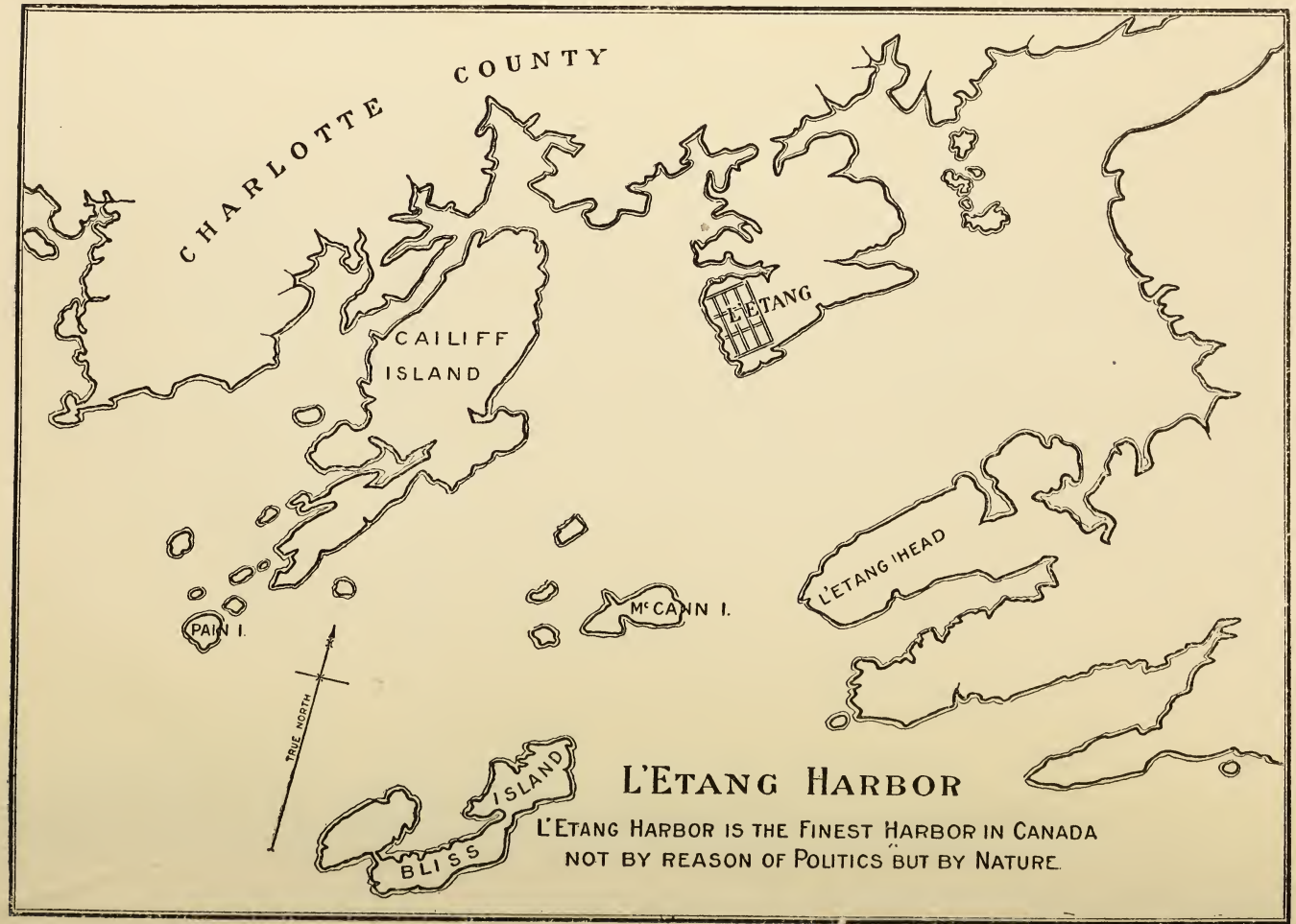
docks; which impression is thoroughly corroborated upon an examination of the official soundings of the harbour.

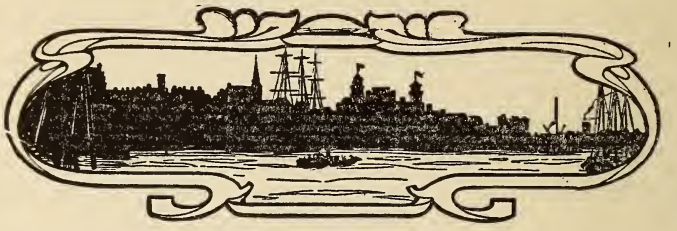
These all, with her reliable and deep approaches, absence of treacherous currents, and perfectly landlocked condition, makes it impossible to the Government, impossible to Commerce, to longer refuse its power to crown her with the success which must inevitably be hers.

JOSEPH L. CLARK.

L'Etang

A LITTLE to the eastward of Passamaquoddy Bay, and which may be considered as connected with it by a chain of islands, is L'Etang Harbour, the best perhaps, in a military light, in the Province, as being the easiest to defend. The entrance into this harbour is formed to the eastward by a narrow point of the mainland, and to the westward by a small island, making a passage about 400 yards wide. Both the shores are high and bold and have about fourteen fathoms of water. This harbour is also sufficiently spacious for any purpose whatever, and most perfectly landlocked. The passage into it, which is in a northwestern direction, is straight and easy and, in case of contrary winds, there are very good anchoring places, or rather other harbours, on each side — one to the southwest, the other to the northeast. Should not the general situation of the harbour be objected to, on account of its being so near the extremity of the Province, and what seems a greater evil, lying in the mouth of the Bay of Fundy, the navigation into which is so extremely difficult on account of the rapidity of the tides and frequency of fogs, I should think it the most eligible harbour I have seen for securing the naval and military arsenals of the Province and, as the tide is more moderate here than higher up in the Bay of Fundy, docks might be constructed in this harbour.


CHARLOTTE COUNTY
L'ETANG
CAILIFF ISLAND
L'ETANG HEAD
McCANN I.
PAIN I.
TRUE NORTH
BLISS ISLAND
L'ETANG HARBOR
L'ETANG HARBOR IS THE FINEST HARBOR IN CANADA
NOT BY REASON OF POLITICS BUT BY NATURE.



St. John

ST. JOHN is about twelve leagues to the eastward of L'Etang Harbour and nearly opposite to Annapolis Royal, the breadth of the Bay of Fundy being here about twelve leagues. This is not a harbour for men-of-war, nor indeed a good one for merchantmen. There is a bar which can be passed only at certain times of the tide, and there are other shoals which make the navigation into it difficult, nor can it be deemed a safe harbour even when a vessel has got in. The coast from hence, eastwards, far up into Chignecto Bay, is like that described on the opposite side of the Bay of Fundy—high, steep, rocky, and without a break in the shore, which is so bold as to render anchoring dangerous, and the tides are so rapid that a very fair and fresh wind is necessary to stem them. In short, the navigation of the whole of the Bay of Fundy, except for a few months in the summer and then with good pilots, is extremely dangerous.

HALIFAX HARBOUR is situated about midway between Cape Canso and Cape Sable; is deep, spacious and easy of access. It is somewhat embayed, but Sambro Lighthouse, near the westernmost head, marks the way into it. The mouth of the harbour is formed to the eastward by Cornwallis Island, and to the westward by Point Pleasant, making a passage at the nearest points of 1,900 yards wide, and 2,400 yards higher up lies George's Island, making two channels into the harbour, the westernmost, which is nearest the town, 750 yards wide; the easternmost 1,600 yards; both these channels are equally good for ships of any burthen. The town, which is situated on the western side, commences at the point nearest to George's Island, and is built parallel to the coast with a continuation of wharves, extending 2,400 yards in length where the Naval Yard is situated. From thence to the entrance into the Basin is 3,200 yards, and the whole extent from George's Island to this entrance, a distance of above three miles, may be considered as a good harbour, gradually diminishing in its breadth towards the Basin. This entrance, which is but 433 yards across, admits vessels into the Basin and seems to offer another and more secure harbour, but the water is too deep and the Basin too spacious for ships to lie in with safety, for with a northwest wind there is frequently a high sea here, and the anchorage near the coast (which is bold) is foul and rocky. Near the entrance of Halifax Harbour, on the western side, separated from it by Point Pleasant, is the Northwest Arm, a very secure little harbour. This branch, running in that direction to within two miles of the Basin, makes a peninsula of which the isthmus is 2,730 yards across, and there is all the appearance of these two arms of the sea having some time or other had a communication between them.

Halifax

ADVANTAGES OF L'ETANG.

Railroads have 45 miles less haul to seaboard than any other Port in Canada.

Sea Voyage 40 miles less than to St. John, N. B.

No Currents in Harbour or approaches.

No Ice. Open Year Round. No Dredging.

Dangers of Bay of Fundy eliminated.

Insurance less than any Port in New Brunswick.

Pilotage and Harbour Dues less than any other Ports.

Approach by land for railroads, 2/10 of 1%.

The depth of water allows Steamships to lay afloat at Wharves, and the entrance is such that any size Steamer may enter at any time of tide.